

Dear Neighbor,

By working to keep our seniors living in their own homes, we help our families, friends and neighbors maintain their independence and dignity. Further, it makes economic sense by avoiding the higher costs of long-term care and saving taxpayer dollars. As Senate chair of the legislature's Select Committee on Aging, I have the unique opportunity and responsibility to lead the way on passing bills which affect elderly residents of our state. Connecticut, like the rest of the country, is facing an imminent crisis, as our huge population of baby boomers approach retirement age. This could strain our already challenged system of services for the elderly, which includes transportation, a range of medical services, nursing home care, socialization in the form of adult day care, nutrition services, prescription drug assistance, and more.

Recently, the Select Committee on Aging passed fourteen bills, including a number of measures designed to make it easier for elderly residents to remain in their own homes as long as they can. These initiatives include property tax relief, increased rates to adult day care services and more funding for elderly nutrition.

These bills are intended to enhance the quality of life for seniors in Connecticut. I believe that this should be one of the state's top priorities. As your state Senator, and co-chair of the Aging Committee, I will make every effort to see that it is.

Sincerely,


Jonathan Harris
State Senator, 5th District



Your State Senator
JONATHAN HARRIS
ASSISTANT MAJORITY LEADER

Legislative Office Building, Room 2100
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

Phone: 240-0558

E-mail: Harris@senatedems.ct.gov

Web: www.senatedems.ct.gov/Harris.html

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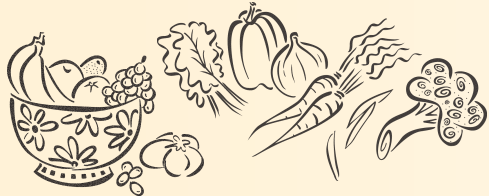
FROM YOUR STATE SENATOR **JONATHAN HARRIS**

2006 AGING COMMITTEE BILLS

Here are some of the bills approved by the Aging Committee this session. I will continue to fight for the concepts in these initiatives as they work their way through the legislative process.

SB 171, An Act Concerning Funding for Elderly Nutrition Programs

This bill provides extra funding for elderly nutrition, an important program that can keep the elderly in their homes, living independently, for a longer period of time. Elderly nutrition is provided both in congregate settings, such as senior centers, and in home delivery, called Meals on Wheels. The bill also provides funding for a program to provide locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables to low-income seniors, an integral component of a balanced diet.



HB 5093, An Act Concerning Property Tax Relief for Certain Elderly Homeowners

This bill would give cities and towns the option of providing increased property tax relief to certain, qualified elderly residents. Unfortunately, towns have a heavy reliance on property taxes, and the rising rates are forcing many elderly residents on fixed incomes to leave their homes, creating a gap in neighborhoods and communities.



SB 101, An Act Concerning Rates Paid by the Commissioner of Social Services for Adult Day Care Services

This bill significantly increases the rate that DSS pays to adult day care centers, which provide socialization, and serve a critical role in keeping people out of nursing homes and living independently longer. Unfortunately, due to historically low rates and rising costs, many centers have closed in recent years, and others struggle to remain open. Providing a rate increase can help these facilities continue to provide critical services to the elderly community.

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HB 5249, An Act Concerning a Refund of the Motor Vehicles Fuel Tax to Providers of Elderly Transportation Services

This bill provides a refund of the gasoline tax to Dial-a-Ride and other providers of transportation for the elderly and disabled, as well as to providers of home care services to the elderly and disabled. Many elderly and disabled residents are able to live mostly independently, as long as they have transportation—to medical appointments, the grocery store, adult day care and other errands—and home care services, often for only a short time each day. The tax refund initiative aims to relieve some of the increased costs faced by providers of these critical services.